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REPORT

ON

NATIVE PAPERS IN BENGAL

FOR THE

Week ending the 9th January 1904.

CONTENTS.

Page.

I.—Foreign Politics.

English movements in Siam 33

II.—Home Administration.

(a)—*Police*—

Kabuli oppressions in the villages of Bengal ... 33

(b)—*Working of the Courts*—

Nil.

(c)—*Jails*—

Nil.

(d)—*Education*—

The new rule about the Primary and Middle Scholarship examinations 33

(e)—*Local Self-Government and Municipal Administration*—

The Calcutta Municipality 34
The Calcutta Municipality 35

(f)—*Questions affecting the land*—

Oppressions committed by the Zamindar Company in Midnapore upon their tenants 35
Survey and settlement oppressions in the Sonthal Parganas 36
The Bhowal Raj Estate ... ... *ib.*

(g)—*Railways and communications, including canals and irrigation*—

Irrigation in the Doro pargana, a Government khas mahal in the Midnapore district 36
Railway complaints ... ... *ib.*
The Howrah-Sheakhala Light Railway ... 37
A railway complaint ... ... *ib.*
The proposed discontinuance of the Khulna express train 38

(h)—*General*—

Mail sorters on the Eastern Bengal State Railway ... 38
Protest against the proposed transfer ... ... *ib.*
The proposed dismemberment of Bengal ... *ib.*
The proposed transfer of East Bengal districts to Assam ... ... *ib.*
The proposed territorial redistribution... ... 39
The maximum weight of quarter-anna postage newspapers 40
The proposed territorial redistribution ... *ib.*
The proposed territorial redistribution ... 41
The proposed dismemberment of Bengal ... *ib.*
The proposed dismemberment of Bengal ... 43

Page.

(h)—*General*—concld.

Grievances in connection with the Government Central Press 43
The question of territorial changes 44
The case of postal signallers ... ... *ib.*
The sale of currency notes—a possible source of trouble to the purchaser ... ... *ib.*
The proposed territorial changes ... ... *ib.*
The proposed transfer of East Bengal districts to Assam 45
The proposed transfer of Dacca, Mymensingh, and Chittagong to Assam ... ... *ib.*
The Budh-Gaya Temple and the District Magistrate of Gaya 46
The proposed territorial changes 47

III.—Legislation.

Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjee not elected for the Viceregal Council 48
The Universities Bill 49
The Excise Act Amendment Bill ... ... *ib.*
The Official Secrets Act Amendment Bill ... *ib.*
The Universities Bill ... . *ib.*

IV.—Native States.

Nil.

V.—Prospects of the Crops and Condition of the People.

Nil.

VI.—Miscellaneous.

The New Year's Day honours 50
The Ancient Monuments' Preservation Bill ... 51

Uriya Papers.

Appointment of native Judges in the Calcutta High Court 51
The Official Secrets Act Amendment Bill ... *ib.*
Union of Ganjam, Sambalpur, and Chutia Nagpur with Orissa ... ... *ib.*
Union of Ganjam, etc., with Orissa ... ... *ib.*
Public health 52

Assam Papers.

Proposed transfer of Chittagong Division with Dacca and Mymensingh to Assam 25

I.—Foreign Politics.

The *Sri Sri Vishnu Priya-o-Ananda Bazar Patrika* [Calcutta] of the 30th December writes as follows:— Sri Sri Vishnu Priya-o-Ananda Bazar Patrika, Dec. 30th, 1903.

English movements in Siam.

French ascendency in Siam has naturally excited English jealousy. Englishmen are, therefore, seeking to lower French ascendency in that State and increase their own. True statesmanship consists in effecting one's wishes by force or stratagem, but without noise or bloodshed. Lately an English law-court has been established there for the trial of Englishmen. This is news to be glad of, for French ascendency in a State so near to Burmah is by no means desirable. Much more good is to be expected from an expedition to Siam under Younghusband for the establishment of free-trade between Burmah and that country when the laudable object of the Tibet mission has been attained. So freely are the English troops entering Tibet that there cannot be the least doubt that very close and sweet relations will soon be established between us and that country. It will, therefore, be quite possible to send an expedition to Siam before Lord Curzon's term of office is over. The bringing of uncivilised Siam under civilised British rule will certainly put an end to all Russian designs upon India and greatly extend the boundaries of the British Empire. But it would be advisable and expedient to clothe Siam in yellow instead of red, for in that case the King of Siam would be able to protect his independence like Holkar, Sindhia, and the Nizam.

II.—Home Administration.

(*a*)—*Police*.

2. The *Bangavasi* [Calcutta] of the 2nd January writes:— Bangavasi, Jan. 2nd, 1904.

Kabuli oppressions in the villages of Bengal.

The Kabulis have proved a great curse to the Bengal villages. They make their appearance in villages mostly as cloth merchants, and sometimes as money-lenders. They induce the villagers to purchase cloths on credit and charge exorbitant prices for them. They lend money at a rate of interest which varies from annas 2 to annas 4 per rupee per month. When the appointed day comes for the payment of the money, the Kabuli creditor goes to the house of the poor villager, who, as may be expected, is unable to pay it. When baffled twice or thrice in his attempts to realize his dues, the Kabuli assumes a menacing attitude, and not only abuses the villager in vile terms, but also assaults him, and sometimes insults his women. The Kabulis commit many other atrocities on the villagers. In railway carriages and on steamers their behaviour makes other passengers suffer the greatest inconvenience and trouble. Their complicity in many cases of dacoity has also come to light. But nothing has hitherto been done to prevent their oppressions and their illegal practices. The police and the mufassal zamindars should closely watch their movements and behaviour.

(*d*)—*Education*.

3. A teacher writes as follows in the *Sanjivani* [Calcutta] of the 31st December:— Sanjivani, Dec. 31st, 1903.

The new rule about the Primary and Middle Scholarship examinations.

It has been announced by Government that from 1904 the Primary and Middle Scholarship examinations will be regarded as private school examinations and a few selected candidates alone will be examined for scholarships. This announcement has excited an alarm in the mind of guardians and teachers in the mufassal that is simply indescribable. There is no knowing how much primary and middle education will fall in the popular estimation when the public come to know of this announcement. Government has now closed the many avenues to a career in life that were once open to successful candidates in the Middle Scholarship examination, and the result has been that the number of middle schools, as well as of students receiving instruction in them, has considerably fallen off. Many of the foremost schools of that class have been converted into entrance schools. In fact, almost none now read in these schools but those who cannot afford the expenses of any

other education. And if the system of granting certificates to the successful candidates from these schools be now discontinued, there will be no inducement whatever for anybody to read in them. For how many boys in a hundred will be selected for scholarships? Again, the nominations shall rest with the officers of the Education Department, which will mean the introduction of corruption within the holy precincts of that department. Even without such powers, those officers are now found able, to secure presents of fish, goats, fowls, and fine plantains. They are found to make undue delay in passing the bills of the poor *gurus*, who fail to propitiate them with presents. Should not the Education Department, under these circumstances, reflect over the mischief and oppression that are sure to result from vesting these officers with this new power? Not that every such officer will prove corrupt, but corruption will be the rule rather than the exception. The result will be that only the students of those teachers who will be able to win the good graces of the educational officers will be selected for scholarships, and thus many promising boys who would otherwise have taken the highest places in the examination will be denied all chance of distinguishing themselves and their genius will be nipped in the bud.

But letting alone all considerations of corruption and consequent partiality, how will it be possible for the Deputy and Sub-Inspectors of Schools to make the selection in the course of two visits to a school (for no such officer is able to pay more than two in a year) lasting for only three or four hours? Of this time, an hour or more is taken up with the examination of accounts, which leaves only an hour or two for examining 60 to 125 students, for such is the average number of students in middle schools. The invariable method adopted by these officers to test the merit of the boys is to set to them one or two sums in Arithmetic, some of the knotty portions in Geometry, a few obscure points in Geography, and some passages from the Literature Reader. The boys who happen to know these things and can answer correctly are taken for the best students, although, as a matter of fact, they may be immensely inferior to other students in the class. Mufassal students are generally timid, and they lose all self-possession and presence of mind in the presence of the educational officers who are regarded by them with great awe and who often make themselves more formidable by the assumption of airs which they would not think of giving themselves in towns. We have found that good boys are often unable, in consequence of this, to answer questions which they knew thoroughly well. Again, a student may unfortunately happen to be absent on the day on which the Inspector comes to visit the school. The result of so injudicious a selection will probably be the exclusion of many good students and the nomination of others of mediocre parts, who, in the ultimate test, will probably fail to secure scholarships and thereby harm the reputation of both their schools and their teachers.

The mufassal public, as well as the mufassal teachers, are deficient in wealth, energy, and power of expression. They must therefore perforce suffer in silence the evils which will be produced by this rule.

Government professes to be very eager for the spread of primary education. But will this arrangement further that end? Is it not proper to consult public opinion before undertaking any reform? The Education Department, we are sure, would never have incurred public disapprobation by this improper action if it had taken care to consult experienced educational officers in the mufassal in actual touch with primary education. We request the Director of Public Instruction to consult the mufassal public, as well as the lower educational officers in the mufassal, on the subject and reconsider the matter. We also beg to draw the attention of our generous Lieutenant-Governor to the matter, and hope that the poor will not have to sigh in vain under his rule.

(*e*)—*Local Self-Government and Municipal Administration.*

SRI SRI VISHNU PRIYA-O-ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA, Dec. 30th, 1903.

The Calcutta Municipality.

4. The *Sri Sri Vishnu Priya-o-Ananda Bazar Patrika* [Calcutta] of the 30th December says that though, in view of the near approach of the plague season, it is the clear duty of the Calcutta Municipality to bestir itself to its utmost to prevent an outbreak

of the disease in the metropolis, it is doing nothing in the matter. The plague centres of the town are in as bad a condition as ever, not the least trouble being taken to cleanse them and improve their sanitation. Is not this apathy on the part of the municipal authorities culpable ?

The outbreak of the plague lasts for three months every year in Calcutta, and the disease remains quiescent for the remaining nine months in the year. The public has, therefore, a right to know what preventive measures the Municipality took during the last period of quiescence. Can the Municipality make a satisfactory answer to this? Is it not a stigma on the municipal administration of Calcutta that it should continue, year after year, to be afflicted by a disease which carries off hundreds of victims every week during the period of its prevalence, though according to Western medical science, it is a preventible disease, and has really been banished from Europe by the adoption of improved sanitation? The Municipality entertains a highly paid Health Officer and a costly special department for the prevention of plague. It contains also many public-spirited medical men as Commissioners. But, in spite of all this, the lack of foresight on the part of the Health Department causes this city to be visited for three months every year by a fell disease which carries off hundreds of thousands, and strikes panic into everybody's heart. Is not this a shame? The first and foremost duty that the new Lieutenant-Governor owes to Calcutta is to bring this idle and worthless Municipality, devoid of any sense of responsibility, to its sense of duty.

5. Referring to a statement recently made by the Honourable Mr. Forbes in the Madras Legislative Council to the effect that the irregularities in the Calcutta Municipal Corporation have been caused not by any fault in the Calcutta Municipal Act, but by the corruption and incompetence of the servants of the Municipality, the *Hitavadi* [Calcutta] of the 1st January says that it is foolish to expect strict and conscientious peformance of duty from the municipal servants if the authorities themselves cannot uphold the dignity of the law. It should be decided who are to be held responsible, and to what extent, for the irregularities in the Corporation. The authorities of the Municipality, headed by its Chairman, should rouse themselves from their habitual torpor. The rate-payers of Calcutta will not long bear the humiliation of their Municipality being spoken of in the Legislative Councils of other provinces as a pattern of corruption and incompetence. We demand an explanation of the irregularities which have been pointed out by Government auditors as having occurred in the Municipality. The rate-payers will never forgive the Chairman, if he does not take up the matter in right earnest and punish the delinquents. At least for the sake of his own honour and prestige, Mr. Greer should lose no time in ascertaining the truth.

HITAVADI, Jan. 1st, 1904.

The Calcutta Municipality.

(f)—Questions affecting the land.

6. The *Medini Bandhav* [Midnapore] of the 30th December complains that Messrs. Watson & Co. commit severe oppressions upon their tenants. The orders of the Company's servants must be obeyed by the tenants, no matter however unjust those orders may be; otherwise their cattle are forcibly carried away from their cattle-sheds, their premises and their lands, and are impounded. Babu Ram Prasanna Mitra, a pleader of the Judge's Court, Midnapore, having established a *hat* (market) at a place called Bhungahatta, the Company found that their own *hat* at Chandra was suffering loss, as the import and sale of goods at the former had gradually increased and those at the latter decreased. Thereupon the Company proclaimed by beat of drum that those among their tenants who should go to the former *hat* would be punished by having their cattle impounded. Some among the tenants, in spite of the above order, ventured to go to Ram Prasanna Babu's *hat*, and for this offence the servants of the Company carried away their cattle, numbering 108, and restored them to their owners only after sureties for the payment of Rs. 13-8 had been given at the rate of two annas per animal. It is to be hoped that Mr. H. Luson, the District Magistrate, will save the poor people from the oppressions of the powerful European Zamindar Company.

MEDINI BANDHAV, Dec. 30th, 1903.

Oppressions committed by the Zamindar Company in Midnapore upon their tenants.

HITAVADI, Jan. 1st, 1904.

Survey and settlement oppressions in the Sonthal Parganas.

7. The *Hitavadi* [Calcutta] of the 1st January says that the officers who carry on settlement work in the Sonthal Parganas commit great *zulm* and oppression on the poor and illiterate Sonthals. The *amins* who do the survey work are paid by commission which never exceeds, Rs. 15 per month per head. But these men manage to earn Rs. 50 per month during the survey season by exacting money from the poor people. Besides this, the latter are obliged to supply them regularly with food. The Survey and Settlement Act requires the presence in the field of all the raiyats of a *mauza* at the time of its survey. But the loss which this provision causes to the poor people in harvest times is really serious. If any one of them fails to attend the field in proper time on any day, he is fined 12 annas by the Assistant Settlement Officer. Harder still is the lot of those poor cultivators who have to work as day-labourers in order to make the two ends meet.

There is an inspector placed over every 8 or 10 *amins*. The poor raiyats have to propitiate him also. His position is higher than that of *amins*. He keeps a horse to ride on, and is accompanied by a cook and servants. But his subordinate *amins* are always careful to supply him with food for his whole retinue.

The Assistant Settlement Officers can, if so minded, prevent all this *zulm* and oppression, but instead of doing that, they themselves bring a great deal of misery on the poor people by their insolence, arbitrariness, and undue partiality towards their subordinates. They beat or fine such people as dare to complain against their subordinates. The work of supervision is also very perfunctorily done by the Assistant Settlement Officers.

The survey work over, begins the work of settlement of land disputes, and people suffer more or less at the hands of the judicial officers who do it. After this, the poor raiyats have to go more than once to the head-quarters at Dumka in order to have *parchas* corrected, to take *pattas*, and to give *kabuliyats*, etc. And here also they have to bribe the men in the Settlement Office at every step in order to get their work done.

Mr. Macpherson, the Settlement Officer, has enforced certain stringent rules for the suppression of *zulm* and oppression, but to no effect. Poor people dare not complain against their powerful oppressors.

BARISAL HITAISHI, Jan. 2nd, 1904.

The Bhowal Raj Estate.

8. The *Barisal Hitaishi* [Barisal] of the 2nd January writes that great confusion having arisen in the Bhowal Raj Estate after the death of the late Rajendra Narayan Ray, a special enquiry was held into the work done by the late Manager, Rai Kaliprasanna Ghosh, Bahadur. The result was that the Rai Bahadur was dismissed and a suit for the recovery of about eleven lakhs of rupees was instituted against him. This shows that a grave misunderstanding has arisen between him and the other party in the estate. The late Raja's sons have in consequence met with humiliation at many places. The present circumstances have probably necessitated the employment of a European manager. The appointment of a European manager, though it gives some advantages, is nevertheless very expensive. Government should keep a watchful eye over the affairs of the estate.

(9)—Railways and communications, including canals and irrigation.

PRAJARANJAN, Dec. 29th, 1903.

Irrigation in the Doro parganna, a Government khas mahal in the Midnapore district.

9. The *Prajaranjan* [Tamluk] of the 29th December draws the attention of Government to the want of facilities for irrigation in certain parts of the Doro parganna, which is a Government khas mahal in the Midnapore district. The *khal* from Horhkhali to the Dakhin Haldi river should be re-excavated, and two new branch *khals* should be dug, one up to Sovarampur and the other up to Debhog. On both banks of the *khal*, from the Haldi river to Horhkhali *bheris* should be constructed. These arrangements will go a great way to prevent the occurrence of famines in the khas mahal.

HITAVADI, Jan. 1st, 1904.

Railway complaints.

10. The *Hitavadi* [Calcutta] of the 1st January publishes the following railway complaints:—

(1). Babu Rajendranath Chakravarti, Hindu Mess, Cuttack, says that recently one day the booking clerk of the Sakshigopal

station on the Bengal-Nagpur Railway refused to sell tickets for Cuttack and Jagatpur to third class Down Mail passengers, on the alleged ground that there were no third-class tickets for those stations in stock in the station. He also refused to write out blank tickets. A friend of the correspondent then asked for tickets for Khurda Road or Bhuvaneswar, but when he handed over money to the booking clerk, the latter said that he had no change. The correspondent and a number of his friends thus missed the 3 c'clock train. Fifty or 60 other passengers also missed it for the same reason. When the matter was brought to the notice of the station-master, the booking-clerk said that he had not written out blank tickets for Jagatpur, because he did not know that the mail train stopped there. After this he was with great difficulty persuaded to write out seven blank tickets for the correspondent and his friends, who had to travel by the 7 o'clock train at night. Even then many passengers were left behind in the station for want of tickets.

(2) Babus Bholanath Chatterji and Sisir Chandra Lahiri, students, Deoghur, say that on the 20th September last, a booking-clerk of the Howrah station refused to sell them a third-class students' concession ticket at half the usual price. The correspondents were thus obliged to buy an inter-class ticket for Baidyanath Junction, the number of which was 0266H.B.

(3) Babu Satyakinkar Basu says that in his other letter.

On the 19th November last, 15 bags of potatoes (F. No. 299) were booked in the name of Kali Pada Sen for the Soh station on the Baktiarpur-Bihar Light Railway. When the usual time for the arrival of the consignment had expired, the Goods Superintendent was written to, but to no effect. A man was sent to the Baktiarpur station, where the station-master dismissed him with the assurance that the consignment was on the way. But it has not yet arrived. The value of the consignment is about Rs. 100.

(4) Babu Kulada Prasad Datta, Hijalna, Burdwan, says that on the 16th November last, Babu Prabhat Ranjan Mitra, with family, arrived at the Saktigarh station by No. 6 down train. Just as the train reached the station he handed down his wife and children, and was about to take down his packages, when the train started. Many of the packages fell down and were damaged. An ornament box also fell down, and some of the ornaments in it were broken. Prabhat Babu leapt into the train. and in doing so, was hurt in the leg. The assistant station-master showed the danger signal, but neither the driver nor the guard of the train heeded it. Prabhat Babu was carried to the Rusulpur station, whence he returned to Saktigarh by No. 25 up train at about 8 P. M. In the meantime his wife and children, left helpless in the Sakhtigarh station, were kindly treated by the station-master. Prabhat Babu and his wife and children had to pass the long winter night in the open shed in the station, in consequence of which he had to suffer for some days from cough, fever, etc. He says that No. 6 down train did not stop at the station for more than one minute. Babu Sarasi Mohan Sarkar, M. B., Chemical Assistant in the Calcutta Medical College, and Babu Devendranath Hajra, L.M.S., of the Bhowanipur Hospital, will, if required, give evidence in the matter, as they were eye-witnesses. Prabhat Babu has written two letters to the Agent of the Railway Company, but it is to be regretted that the latter has not yet favoured him with a reply.

The Howrah-Sheakhala Light Railway.

11. Referring to the fact that on the 21st December last, a wheel of a carriage in an up train on the Howrah-Sheakhala Light Railway gave way near the Belgechia station, the *Howrah Hitaishi* [Howrah] of the 2nd January says that the authorities of the railway should see that the carriages on it are kept well repaired and in good order. Telegraphic arrangements should also be made on the line. HOWRAH HITAISHI. Jan. 2nd, 1904.

A railway complaint.

12. Referring to the complaint which we have more than once made, says the same paper, to the effect that in certain train times female ticket-collectors do not attend at the entrance of third class female passengers in the Howrah station, the General Traffic Manager of the line gave us hope, in his letter No. 1351, dated the 8th December 1903, of speedy reform in the matter. But the evil continues as before. Even during the last week, male ticket-collectors checked the tickets of third-class female passengers in No. 7 up Kalka train. HOWRAH HITAISHI.

BANGAVASI, Jan 2nd, 1904.

The proposed discontinuance of the Khulna express train.

13. The *Bangavasi* [Calcutta] of the 2nd January writes that the Bengal Central Railway authorities contemplate discontinuing the running of the Khulna express train which leaves Calcutta for Khulna at 6-13 A.M. and returns to Calcutta at 10 P.M. The reason why there are so few passengers by the evening train is that passengers arriving at Calcutta so late at night are put to great inconvenience. By changing the timing in such a manner that the train may reach Calcutta before evening, the Railway authorities will find that the number of passengers will increase, and there will then be no necessity for discontinuing the train. This arrangement will save the Railway from loss and save the passengers from serious inconvenience, which must result if the train is discontinued.

(h)—General.

HITAVARTA, Dec. 27th, 1903.

Mail sorters on the Eastern Bengal State Railway.

14. The *Hitavarta* [Calcutta] of the 27th December says that the Postal authorities ought to direct their attention to the paucity of mail sorters on the portion of the Eastern Bengal State Railway lying between Sealdah and Goalundo. So long a line has only seven sorters who have to work by three turns in a day. Whenever, however, there is any unusual delay in consequence of this insufficiency of the staff, the Superintendents and Inspectors of the Railway Mail punish these sorters very severely and sometimes dismiss them. This is very hard upon the poor sorters.

CHARU MIHIR, Dec. 29th, 1903.

Protest against the proposed transfer.

15. The *Charu Mihir* [Mymensingh] of the 29th Deccember says that Mr. Risley's proposal has created a widespread commotion in the Mymensingh district. The editor desires to publish the paper twice every week in order to give detailed accounts of protest meetings, etc. Such meetings have already been held at Muktagacha, Sherpur, Karatia, Kanihari, Jamalpur, Tangail, Alisakanda, Netrakona and Sankrail.

TRIPURA HITAISHI, Dec. 29th, 1903.

The proposed dismemberment of Bengal.

16. Referring to the proposed territorial transfer, the *Tripura Hitaishi* [Comilla] of the 29th December writes as follows:—

Why are the authorities so anxious to make a geographical and administrative division of Bengal, when a new national life is beginning to be inspired into it and unity and fraternity are being gradually established among the inhabitants of all the parts of the country, far and near? To unmake is easier than to make.

Shrewd Anglo-Indian politicians with Lord Curzon at their head sometimes remark that it is a matter of great regret that the Indians cannot understand what these politicians do for their good. What a fine remark! Even such languages as those which are spoken by Daflas and Nagas are being recognised as local languages, constant attempts are being made to separate province from province, natives are being deprived of their rights and *ferngis* introduced into the public service—how shall we understand the generous spirit which underlies these acts of Government? Even men like Gokhale, Bhandarkar, Dadabhai Naroji, and Romesh Chunder are, in spite of their high education and talents, obtuse enough not to understand it. These Anglo-Indian politicians are no doubt very expert in word-painting.

PALLIVASI, Dec. 30th, 1903.

The proposed transfer of East Bengal districts to Assam.

17. The *Pallivasi* [Kalna] of the 30th December writes as follows:—

We have failed to appreciate the reasons put forward by Mr. Risley in favour of the proposed dismemberment of Bengal. The Viceroy is able to govern the whole Indian Empire with the aid of the Provincial Governors. Why should it be impossible for the Lieutenant-Governor to govern Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa with the help of Divisional Commissioners? We have no faith in the truth of the statement that the head of the Government needs direct knowledge of every detail of the administration. It has been well said that "the king sees through his ears." What do we see in practice? When Divisional Commissioners and District Magistrates go out in the mufassal, they

simply do their routine duties there. They seldom enquire about the condition of the people. The Lieutenant-Governor during his tours, hears many things only from addresses presented to him. It cannot therefore be said that mere touring in the mufassal can impart to the rulers complete knowledge of the country. If the administration of the province has become more difficult than before, owing to an increase of population, let additional Commissioners be appointed, and let the divisional jurisdictions be extended. The argument that because the administration of the province has become more complex therefore it should be broken up into parts, is one that is absolutely unsound.

We are against the proposed transfer of Dacca, Mymensingh, and Chittagong to Assam. Such a step will give a rude shock to the people of those districts. Dacca and Mymensingh have a glorious past. History bears witness to the wide celebrity which Dacca enjoyed during Hindu and Muhammadan rule for thousands of years. For Lord Curzon to tear out the pages of history and aim a death-blow at the hoary head of Bengal would be a most ungracious thing. Dacca, Mymensingh, and Chittagong have been from time immemorial inseparably connected. The people of those districts are far more intimately connected with Western Bengal than with Sylhet and Cachar. So, if it is proposed to preserve ethnological similarity, the existing relations should not be disturbed.

Another point which strikes us is that if the proposed transfer of the districts in question is carried out, the new province will in time require a Lieutenant-Governor for its administration, and consequently the establishment of a Council, of a High Court or Chief Court, and of a Revenue Board, and numerous other arrangements, which will necessitate a huge expenditure. This consideration, as well as others already enumerated, have led us to oppose the proposal of the Government of India.

The proposed territorial redistribution.

18. Referring to the recent communication which passed between the Bengal Government and the Government of India, relating to the redistribution of territorial jurisdictions and the popular objections thereto, the *Sri Sri Vishnu Priya-o-Ananda Bazar Patrika* [Calcutta] of the 30th December writes as follows:—

SRI SRI VISHNU PRIYA-O-ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA, Dec. 30th, 1903.

The Bengal Government and the Government of India, shrewd as they are, ought to have thought twice before holding this correspondence. They ought to have enquired if the private gentlemen with whom they had a conversation on the subject were really representatives of the Dacca and Mymensingh people. The fact is that Sir Andrew Fraser has not yet become acquainted with the characteristics of the inhabitants of Dacca and Mymensingh. The Government of India may look upon those people as no better than the people of Assam, but, as a matter of fact, the residents of Dacca and Mymensingh are far more intelligent than the residents of Assam and are well able to look after their interests. They possess sufficient intelligence to see that the proposal of the Government of India, if carried out, will have the effect of placing them under an administration inferior to the one under which they now live. They have, accordingly, girt up their loins in order to make their objections reach the ears of the Government. Protest meetings are being held in every village in the two districts and extensive preparations are being made to carry on a strong agitation. The people know that the powerful Government of this country can do anything it likes. But they also know that the English are an upright people. Particular Englishmen may do wrong from caprice, *zid*, evil intention, or want of intelligence, but the generous English people as a nation will never encourage such wrong-doing. Uprightness is an ingrained virtue of Englishmen, and it is because the Indian people believe it that they are about to bring their objections to the proposed transfer to the notice of Lord Curzon.

Considering Mr. Risley's knowledge of the ethnology, language, manners, and customs of the Indian people, many people think that the arguments, which have been brought forward in favour of a transfer, based as many of them are on grounds of ethnology, language, etc., have been devised by Mr. Risley. If so, it must be admitted that Mr. Risley has failed to show in

his letter the same depth of learning that he has evinced in his book on Indian castes and tribes. His reasoning is. in many places, self-conflicting. For instance, he has proposed to transfer the Chota Nagpur Division to the Central Provinces because "the Bengal form of administration is too highly developed, too legalised, and too impersonal for backward tracts and primitive hill-tribes." Does Mr. Risley support his proposal to transfer Dacca and Mymensingh to Assam by similar reasoning? One argument in favour of the proposed transfer of Dacca and Mymensingh to Assam is the geographical consideration that both the districts are separated from Bengal by the Brahmaputra. The *Englishman* newspaper has given a reply to this argument.

It has, indeed, been childish for Mr. Risley to set his opinions against those of people who, born and bred in the districts in question, must certainly know more of them than he can possibly do. His arguments are, in truth, nothing but worthless and ludicrous. The writer would have been the last to ridicule Mr. Risley's ignorance if his proposals had not affected the social and political interests of the people.

After all the other arguments for and against the proposed redistribution have been balanced, the strongest argument which remains in favour of the proposal is the determination of Government to carry it into effect. And that determination is law to the Indian people. The cries and representations of the people have no weight with such a Government. The object, at least the ostensible object of the Government of India in proposing a dismemberment of Bengal, is to relieve the Bengal administration of a portion of its heavy burden. This is only a plausible plea. There must be some ulterior secret object at the bottom. According to some people this impossible redistribution proposal has been made so suddenly only to divert the attention of the Bengalis from some momenteous question. According to others, the proposal has for its object the prevention of unity among educated and intelligent Bengalis. The writer cannot agree in these views, although he knows that the arguments adduced by the Government are no arguments at all and serve only to show what the Government has set its mind upon carrying out by the exercise of its boundless power. Mr. Risley has said in so many words that the people may raise a thousand and one objections to the proposal, but the Government will pay no heed to them.

Though, according to some people, the arguments of Government are of a piece with the arguments which were heard from the mouth of the wolf which wanted to kill the lamb, yet the people should approach Lord Curzon with their representations. An intelligent and considerate ruler like His Excellency will not fail to remove the popular alarm.

MURSHIDABAD HITAISHI, Dec. 30th, 1903.

The maximum weight of quarter-anna postage newspapers.

19. The *Murshidabad Hitaishi* [Murshidabad] of the 30th December writes that the rule which is to take effect from the 1st January next, raising the maximum weight of quarter anna postage newspapers from 4 *tolas* to 6 *tolas*, will be advantageous to the proprietors of English papers and only to a few proprietors of Bengali papers. The great majority of Bengali papers will gain nothing by the concession. If, instead of making this rule, Government had allowed the exchange of newspapers among the editors free of postage, all newspapers would have enjoyed the advantage. Government will, it is hoped, re-introduce the system of post free change of nowspapers.

JYOTI, Dec. 31st, 1903.

The proposed territorial redistributions.

20. The *Jyoti* [Chittagong] of the 31st December criticises in the following manner the arguments made use of by Government to support the proposal of transferring Chittagong to Assam:—

(1) It has been said that the Government of Bengal, dominated by the interests of the Calcutta port, has not been able to do much towards promoting the advancement of the Chittagong port. We doubt whether, if Chittagong is transferred to Assam, the Assam Government will do much towards the same object. On the contrary, we fear that in case of such transference the revenue of Chittagong will be spent for the benefit of Assam. If the Chittagong port is at all improved, it will be improved with its own income.

(2) We find no reason why the Assam-Bengal Railway should be placed under the control of one Government. Is the East Indian Railway under one Government?

(3) Chittagong resembles Sylhet and Cachar in many respects, not because the inhabitants of the latter places are Assamese, but because they are Bengalis. The complicated form which land-tenure has at present assumed in Chittagong requires that it should not lose the benefit of the Bengal Council and the Board of Revenue. Again, who knows that in future Chittagong will not be placed under a Judicial Commissioner? The Bengali inhabitants of Chittagong are not Kukis or Jumias. They are a people who have been respected and honoured all over Bengal ever since the dawn of Musalman power in India.

21. The Noakhali correspondent of the *Sanjivani* [Calcutta] of the 31st December says that before the proposal to partition Bengal was published in the *Gazette*, Government had commenced to acquire land in Chittagong for the construction of public buildings that would be required when Chittagong became the capital city of the new province. It is also rumoured that before the publication of the proposal, it was known to the Nawab of Dacca and he had offered to supply Government with all land and buildings, at his own cost, for the location of public offices, if Government agreed to make Dacca the capital. But Government did not accept the offer, though by accepting it Government might have enlisted the sympathy of the more stupid of the Dacca and Mymensingh people. The proposal to make Chittagong the capital of the newly-created province has already to a great extent disarmed the opposition of the people of that Division. The proposal of transferring Chittagong to Assam is a long-standing one, but it is not known what the Government's object is in suddenly proposing a transfer of Dacca and Mymensingh also. The truth is that the proposed transfer will do harm to the Bengal districts.

SANJIVANI, Dec. 31st, 1903.

The proposed territorial redistribution.

The Mymensingh correspondent of the same paper says that Lord Curzon's policy in India has been (1) to take all precautions against a foreign invasion of India and, with this object, to keep on good terms with the rulers of neighbouring countries, (2) to keep the native princes overawed and tied hand and foot, and (3) to rule the masses with a rod of iron. The proposal to create a new Lieutenant-Governorship on the north-east frontier has been made in furtherance of his first-mentioned policy, just as the new province was created on the north-west frontier. Lord Curzon is quite right in arriving at the conclusion that a strong and resourceful provincial Government on the north-east frontier has become a necessity to India for the defence of its eastern frontier. But His Excellency has not been happy in the choice of his means to carry out his object. Instead of proposing to create a new province by adding to Assam some districts in Bengal, what His Excellency ought to have proposed was to include Assam in Bengal and place the amalgamated province under a Governor. By doing this, Lord Curzon would have (1) created a strong and powerful Government on the eastern frontier, which could not only stand on its own legs in times of peril, but would be in a position to help other provinces in such times, (2) created a new and stronger Civil Service for the entire amalgamated area, and (3) reduced the cost of administration of the Lower Provinces and Assam and have, thereby, set free a very large amount of capital which could be employed on works of public utility, such as railways, roads, etc., and on the construction of works of defence. Amalgamation of Assam with Bengal would have also lightened the burden of work which now lies on the shoulders of the Government of India, and enabled it to devote greater attention to the good of the whole country.

Lord Curzon is requested to give the proposal his kind consideration, especially as the people of the Bengal districts will never consent to have their connection with Calcutta cut off, nor to forego the political privileges which they now enjoy.

22. The same paper mentions the following as the inevitable evil consequences of the proposed transfer of Chittagong, Dacca, and Mymensingh to Assam:—

SANJIVANI,

The proposed dismemberment of Bengal.

(1) The transfer will result in the educational deterioration of those places because (*a*) the educational deficit in Assam, which amounted in 1901-1902 to four lakhs of rupees, will have to be made up from the educational allotments of the transferred areas; (*b*) the Assam educational service will not, even after

the incorporation of those places, be rich enough to attract first-rate Professors, and the quality of instruction will, therefore, be inferior to that in Bengal; (*c*) scholarship-holders will have to read in some Assam college, and not in the Presidency College, as at present, and it will not be possible to establish in Assam a college of the status of the Presidency College, or even of the private colleges in Calcutta; (*d*) the moral and educational atmosphere of Calcutta which is so inspiring and wholsome in its influence to students from those areas, will no longer inspire them; and (*e*) the facilities which now exist for many students belonging to those parts who receive their education in Calcutta, by reason of their guardians living in that place for the sake of business, will cease when the proposed transfer has taken place.

(2) A social deterioration is equally inevitable. We know that the division of the Brahmins and Kayasthas of Bengal into different sections which do not intermarry with one another—a circumstance which has made daughters' marriages so expensive in Bengal, by circumscribing the sphere from which eligible husbands can be chosen—is a creation of geographical separation. The effect of the proposed transfer of Dacca and Mymensingh will be to create further subdivisions of the above two castes, which will render the marriage difficulty even worse than at present.

(3) A general decline is no less inevitable, for the metropolis of a country must always be the centre of civilization, so that places are more or less advanced in civilization in proportion to their touch with it. The transferred areas will, therefore, deteriorate in civilization by loss of touch with Calcutta, for neither the town of Dacca, nor the town of Chittagong will be any way comparable to Calcutta as a centre of civilization.

(4) A legislative deterioration is equally inevitable, for laws in Assam are not passed in a Legislative Council, as in Bengal, but by the Chief Commissioner in secret consultation with the Viceroy. True, Government promises to take a representative from Assam into the Viceregal Council, but what will one man be able to effect there, seeing that in Bengal the representations of eight or nine popular representatives often prove ineffectual against the passing of objectionable measures? The people of the transferred areas will thus be deprived of the valuable legislative right which they have acquired.

(5) There will be less effectual check upon official vagaries, for the Viceroy lives at Simla for eight months in the year, and no interpellations will be possible in his Council during that time.

(6) There will be also certain judicial deterioration. By Government's own admission, high class Civilians do not go to Assam, the reason being that prospects in the local service are not such as to attract good men. Will those prospects brighten so much by the proposed incorporation? It is certain that no good Civilians will go to the transferred areas, and "Captain *Sahibs*" will act there as Judges and Magistrates, with the result that there will be judicial vagaries both in civil and criminal trials. Again, the judicial deficit of Assam will have to be made up by the transferred areas, so that administration of justice will suffer there.

(7) There will be no independent judicial officers, for Government says that those officers will be completely subject to the control of the Assam Government. It says also, it is true, that the High Court's authority shall remain unaffected. It is impossible to reconcile these two statements.

(8) The present income of Assam is not large enough for purposes of construction of roads leading to the tea-gardens. A portion of the proceeds of the Public Works cess in Dacca must therefore be employed for this purpose. At present there is a deficit every year in the exchequer of the Assam Government. The Government of India can no longer make up this deficit, and it therefore proposes to restore financial equilibrium by the incorporation of Dacca, Mymensingh, and Chittagong.

(9) The proposed transfer will result in the ascendency of Lord Curzon's favourite tea-planters in the transferred areas, so that they will be able to enrich themselves by getting themselves appointed as Managers of Court of Wards' estates. Bengalis will not thus be appointed even as Managers of estates. The tea-planters are now all-powerful in Assam, as it is at present constituted, and they will be also all-powerful in the newly-constituted Assam.

(10) By the incorporation of Dacca, Mymensingh, and Chittagong with Assam, the sphere of the employment of their inhabitants in the public service will be circumscribed, for henceforward they will not be employed in Bengal, nor in any other district of the newly constituted province, but their own; for the Chief Commissioner has recently issued an order to this effect, that as far as possible, no resident of another district shall be employed in the ministerial service, and this probably with a view to prevent the monopolisation by Bengalis of the posts in the Assam service.

(11) As a result of the proposed transfer, all civil appeals shall lie to the High Court, while all revenue appeals shall lie to the Chief Commissioner. This will be inconvenient to the landholders in two ways: it will necessitate the keeping of agents both in Calcutta and the head-quarters of Assam, and will afford less security against failure of justice in revenne appeals, inasmuch as parties are not allowed to be represented by pleaders before the Chief Commissioner.

(12) Hatkhola in Calcutta owes its present prosperity to the traders of Dacca and Mymensingh. The rice and jute trades are mainly in the hands of these traders. They have invested crores of rupees in these trades and incurred a very large outlay in constructing buildings in Calcutta for that purpose. The object of Government is to transfer these trades to Chittagong. But has it reflected upon the loss which the trade of Calcutta will suffer in the event of such transfer, and is it prepared to pay the East Bengal traders twenty to twenty-five crores of rupees as compensation?

(13) The fixing of the Jamuna and the Padma as boundaries will prove a prolific and ceaseless source of trouble and confusion, for as their courses are constantly shifting widely, areas adjacent to their banks will be ceaselessly transferred and re-transferred from one province to another.

We ask Government whether the thirteen objections mentioned by us above are imaginary objections. The announcement that Dacca, Mymensingh, and Chittagong will be transferred to Assam has grieved and disquieted people and is spreading discontent on all sides. Lord Curzon, why have you raised this storm in a tranquil sea? Does nothing delight you but thunder, lightning, and storm? The people of Dacca, Mymensingh, and Chittagong are deeply affected by shame and sorrow. Hold, hold back the thunder bolt. Do not ruin the subjects of King Edward VII.

The proposed dismemberment of Bengal.

23. The same paper publishes a number of telegrams indicative of the deep alarm and uneasiness of the people caused by the Government's proposal to dismember Bengal. The agitation is daily increasing in extent and depth. Protest meetings have begun to be held in every village, and the villagers are sending telegrams about the holding of such meetings to newspapers at their own cost. Mr. Risley's statement about the improvement which will be effected in the position of the East Bengal zamindars by the propesed transfer is not likely to take in anybody but fools. We know who is the man who has told the Lieutenant-Governor that people will not object much to the proposed transfer if the newly constituted province be given some other name than Assam and if its head-quarters be transferred from Shillong. However high the official position of this man, the public have grave doubts about his common sense.

SANJIVANI, Dec. 31st, 1903.

Grievances in connection with the Government Central Press.

24. The *Hitavadi* [Calcutta] of the 1st January says that since the middle of October last, the compositors of the Government Central Press situate in Calcutta are being compelled to work even on Sundays in contravention of the provisions of the factory law. The sort of treatment which the compositors receive in the Press will be evident from the fact that in one year no less than Rs. 13,000 have been realised from them as fines. The Superintendent of the Press, however, gets credit by showing a saving to the Government in this manner. The attendance register of the Press shows that under its present manager more than 4,000 compositors have resigned service, and that at present there are very few men in it of more than 10 years' service. There has become a scarcity of compositors in the Press, owing to the ill-treatment which they receive at the hands of its authorities. It has therefore become necessary for those who are working in it to work even on Sundays. The attention of the Inspector of Factories in Calcutta is drawn to the matter. The compositors are nowadays paid on the piece-work system and not by salaries, and yet they do not earn a *cowri* more than what they used to earn

HITAVADI, Jan. 1st, 1904.

before. But *daftaris* and others now earn double of what they used to earn when they received fixed monthly pay. This statement is proved by the list of the earnings of *daftaris* from 1882-83 to 1898-99 contained in the book named "Prices and Wages in India" published by Government.

There is an engine and a boiler in the Press and an ignorant engine-driver is in charge of them. This seriously endangers the lives of those who work in the Press. There is an Engineer in the Press at Dharamtolla, but he cannot be expected to have always an eye on the engine in the Central Press.

HITAVADI, Jan. 1st, 1904

25. Referring to the proposed territorial changes, the same paper writes as follows:—

The question of territorial changes.

If it is really the object of the Government of India to relieve the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal of a portion of the heavy burden which now lies upon him, can it not be attained by any change other than what has been proposed for the purpose? Why not transfer to the neighbouring Governments districts in which the Bengali language is not spoken? A correspondent writing from Dacca proposes a transfer of the Shahabad and Saran districts to the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Benares, and of Chutia Nagpur (except Giridhi, Purulia, and Manbhum) and the Uriya-speaking districts to the Central Provinces. Cuttack and Sambalpur, and Vizianagaram and Raypur will soon be joined by railroads, so that if Raypur is made the head-quarters of the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, there will be an end to all inconveniences. This arrangement, supplemented by a transfer of Assam to Bengal, will make the jurisdiction of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal extend over six crores and five lakhs of people—three crores and five lakhs of Bengalis, one crore and 80 lakhs of Beharis and 60 lakhs of Assamese. In this way Government will be at liberty to improve the Chittagong port and do good to Dacca, Cachar, and Assam instead of doing any harm to East Bengal. Besides this, a Lieutenant-Governorship may be created and a High Court established for the benefit of the Central Provinces. There will also be no need of keeping a Chief Commissioner in Assam. If by this arrangement the Central Provinces become unwieldy, Berar may be transferred to Bombay, with which it has linguistic and racial affinities, and Sindh may be transferred to the Punjab. The Punjab wants a sea-port and a transfer of Sindh to it will supply this want. And Sindh is naturally fitter to be connected with the Punjab than with Bombay, in which the Mahratta population predominates.

HITAVADI,

26. A correspondent of the same paper says that Mr. Badshah has promulgated a novel rule in the Postal Department to the effect that the postal signallers of one division should not be transferred to another division. If the climate of one division does not suit the health of a signaller, he will not be transferred to another division. A case will make the injustice of the rule clear. Babu Nagendra Bhusan Das, the signaller in a Sub-Post Office in the Backergunge district, has been made permanent on Rs. 40 because there is no post on Rs. 35 in the division. On the other hand, the senior postal signaller of Putia in the Rajshahi district is rotting on Rs. 35 in that unhealthy place without any prospect of advancement.

The case of postal signallers.

HITAVADI,

27. A correspondent writing to the same paper draws attention to the fact that the manner in which currency notes are now sold is open to serious objection, inasmuch as the buyer may be put to trouble by it. Suppose a thousand-rupee-currency note is sold by *A* to *B*, *A* signing his name and address on the note as usual. *A* then employs *C* as his trusted agent who sends information to the Currency Office that the currency note purchased by him from *A* has been lost. *B* then goes to the Currency Office and applies for change and is immediately arrested by the police. *C* easily proves that he really purchased the note from *A*. What will then be the fate of *B*? The correspondent suggests that both the seller and the buyer of a currency note should sign their names upon it instead of only the seller signing it as is usually done.

The sale of currency notes—a possible source of trouble to the purchaser.

RANGALAY. Jan. 2nd, 1904.

28. The *Rangalay* [Calcutta] of the 2nd January writes to the following effect:—

The proposed territorial changes.

Arrangements are, it is said, being made for dividing Bengal into 10, and Assam into 4 divisions after the proposed

territorial changes have been effected. It is also contemplated, the rumour goes on to say, that after five years a Lieutenant-Governorship will be created, and a Chief Court or High Court, a Medical College, and an Engineering College will be established in Assam. From all this, it appears that the number of posts for Europeans will be greatly increased in consequence of the proposed changes. It is therefore madness on our part to oppose the proposal and, with it, all the interests involved in it. The proposed territorial redistribution will be effected in spite of all opposition. The interests of white men in this matter, besides the interests of service, may be classified under the following heads and stated as follows:—

(1) The Calcutta port will not long remain what it now is, because the Hooghly is gradually silting up. It is therefore necessary that the Chittagong port should be improved for the export trade of Bengal and Assam.

(2) The spread of high education in Bengal has made the Babu class very powerful. The transfer of the highly educated districts of Dacca, Mymensingh, Chittagong, etc., to Assam and the pressure of Orissa and Bihar on Burdwan, Rajshahi and other districts will most probably check the spirit and growth of the Babu class.

(3) The proposed changes will greatly weaken the Calcutta High Court and, with it, the vakil and barrister class. This is not a small gain from the political point of view.

(4) The proposed transfer of Dacca and Mymensingh to Assam will weaken the hold of the Permanent Settlement on them. Gradually other parts of Bengal will also be similarly affected.

29. The *Nava Yug* [Calcutta] of the 2nd January enumerates the objections to the proposed transfer of Dacca, Mymensingh, and Chittagong to Assam as follows:— NAVA YUG, Jan. 2nd, 1904.

The proposed transfer of East Bengal districts to Assam.

(1) Great social confusion must be the result of the transfer. At present all the higher castes of Dacca, Mymensingh, Barisal, and Jessore belong to one and the same social union. The social and religious customs are the same, and marriage relations subsist between members of the same caste, in these districts. The Kulin Brahmans of Bikrampur have intimate relations with many Brahman families of Western Bengal. The people of these districts have no such connexion with any class of people in Assam.

(2) The Bengali and the Assamese language are widely different. If Lord Curzon has formed his conclusions upon the subject on the strength of the report of a man of Mr. Risley's knowledge, all we can say is, that His Excellency has been ill-informed.

(3) Then comes the question of education. Education is very backward in Assam. The districts proposed to be transferred are far advanced in this respect. There is no classification of educational officers in Assam, and the officers of the Education Department serving in those districts will share the fate of officers in non-regulation provinces. By the proposed transfer the people of Dacca and the other districts will be deprived of the advantages of the Medical and the Engineering College of Calcutta.

(4) Lastly comes the question of the administration of justice. The transferred districts will be placed out of the jurisdiction of the High Court. Those who are acquainted with the details of the case of Mr. Jolly, know full well how officers in the lower Courts are appointed. The Judicial Commissioners, that is to say, the planters of Assam, will be the sole arbiters of the fate of the people of those districts.

30. The *Bangavasi* [Calcutta] of the 2nd January writes:— BANGAVASI, Jan. 2nd, 1904.

The proposed transfer of Dacca, Mymensingh and Chittagong to Assam.

There is universal opposition to the proposed dismemberment of Bengal. Not only have native newspapers opposed the project but many Anglo-Indian papers have also done the same. The Viceroy, since his arrival in the city, has found no peace of mind. There have been protest meetings in Dacca, Mymensingh, and Chittagong, and the agitation that has been set up is truly gigantic. Rai Radhaballav Chowdhuri, Bahadur, presided at a meeting held at Sherpur in the Mymensingh district on the 22nd December last. This meeting was attended by zamindars, talukdars, merchants, traders and other classes of people, and the speakers explained to

the audience the inconvenience and the loss that would follow if the proposed transfer was effected. At a special meeting of the Dacca People's Association attended by the *elite* of the Dacca town, Rai Kali Prasanna Ghosh Bahadur, proposed that a Committee should be formed of which the members should go from place to place in the mufassal and explain to the people what a revolutionary proposal Government has made. The proposal was carried unanimously.

The matter, indeed, is a very serious one. We think Government would have been well-advised not to make such a proposal at such a time as the present. Considering the violent agitation that has arisen over the Indian Universities Bill and the Official Secrets Act Amendment Bill, we are deliberately of opinion that the proposal of transfer has been most inopportune. The impending war between Japan and Russia must make Government extremely anxious. Nearer home, the uncertainties of the Tibetan Mission are not less likely to disturb the equanimity of Government. This certainly is not the time when such an objectionable and unpopular proposal should have been made.

What reply the Government of Bengal will give to Mr. Risley's letter is a matter of anxious thought to all. Considering the importance of the subject, it is expected that the Bengal Government will carefully weigh all the circumstances before coming to a definite conclusion. But the indications we have already got of the attitude of the Government of Bengal are not at all encouraging.

The assurance that the name of the new province will be changed either to "Eastern Provinces" or to "North-Eastern Provinces," that the jurisdiction of the High Court will remain unchanged, that Shillong will be the summer residence of the Chief Commissioner as Darjeeling is of the Lieutenant-Governor, and that Dacca or Chittagong will be the capital town, has failed to reassure the public mind. On the other hand, the Chief Commissioner of Assam is afraid that Assam will be swamped by East Bengal. The Chief Commissioner of Assam is already too much engrossed with the tea-planters and the coolies How can he be expected to take charge of a much wider province? The tea-planters of Assam are very powerful. Is it likely that they will pull well with the zamindars of East Bengal? The people of East Bengal are not quite sure as to the continuance of the jurisdiction of the High Court, and the *Pioneer* has declared that they will eventually lose the privilege.

The Lieutenant-Governor has, by his attitude, indicated that he is in favour of the proposed transfer. The whole of Bengal ought to protest and protest strongly. Let us all be up and doing.

31. The same paper writes as follows:—

BANGAVASI, Jan. 2nd, 1904.

The Budh-Gaya Temple and the District Magistrate of Gaya.

Mr. F. W. Duke, District Magistrate of Gaya, has given the following notice at the Budh-Gaya Temple:—

"It is strictly forbidden to damage, injure or to remove anything from this building, or from the compound of the temple. Any one transgressing the instruction will be liable to prosecution."

And the notice given at the Mahabodhi tank is as under:—

"It is strictly forbidden to bathe or pollute the water of this tank. Any one transgressing this instruction will be liable to prosecution."

These extraordinary orders have greatly terrified the people of Budh-Gaya. It is not clear why such orders have been issued all of a sudden.

The Mohunt of the temple being previously apprised of the fact that the notices were about to be given, made a representation to Babu Sri Gopal Basu, the officer in charge of Public Works at Budh-Gaya, that the notices in question would affect his ownership of the temple and the tank as well as his religious rights and privileges, and requested that his respectful protest might be forwarded to the higher authorities. But no notice was taken of this representation.

We do not know what justification Government had for its action. The Hindu community anxiously await an explanation which, we hope, will be offered without delay.

32. The *Dacca Gazette* [Dacca] of the 4th January has the following in its English columns:— DACCA GAZETTE, Jan. 4th, 1904.

The proposed territorial changes.

One of the principal reasons urged by the Government in favour of the change is, that unless there be at least three Commissionerships in the Assam service, which will be its "prize appointments," it will not be attractive to the Civilians and will never be able to attain to the level of an "efficient administration." We don't know what to think of Civil Servants who have not been able to attain the standard of efficiency required even in a backward province like Assam; but the indirect condemnation of the present Assam Civil service, which is contained in the letter, does not convey to us any assurance that any change for the better even in that service will be effected. On the contrary, it fills our minds with apprehensions that we are going to be subjected to a far worse system of administration than that which we have at present. It is sought to make the future service in Assam "self-contained and independent." The majority of the members of this service will receive their initial training in the semi-civilized parts of the Province, which even after the change, will far exceed in area the parts added to it; many of them will also have to deal with tribes which have not yet emerged from the primitive stage. Accustomed to summary methods of rule in these tracts, these Civilians will naturally chafe and kick against the fetters imposed by the far more "precise forms of administration" hitherto prevalent in these parts and any "touch" between the rulers and the ruled will surely be to the disadvantage of the latter.

The judicial service is sure to deteriorate under the new regime and for the same reason as mentioned above. Subordination to the High Court of Calcutta will hardly save the judiciary from the effects of judicial training in places where difficult questions of law seldom present themselves for solution. Moreover, if the change be really effected, there will inevitably arise the necessity for a separate and independent final Court of Appeal which will be sought to be supplied by the appointment of a Judicial Commissioner. It is needless to say that such a tribunal will not possess half the efficiency and independence which the High Court of Calcutta still retains, much as it has fallen from its former high state.

In the letter under review, the Government of India has been so far carried away by its solicitude for the welfare of the Civil service, the planters and the miners, that it has entirely forgotten to utter the usual cant about the good of the people being its sole aim in everything it does. Indeed, popular sentiments and interests have been utterly ignored for the sake of the "vastly superior interests at stake." It is doubtful whether the advisers of Government have ever paused to consider the vast social, religious, and educational changes that will follow. In social and religious matters, in India at least, political association and separation play a very important part. Our association with the backward districts of Assam must necessarily bring about a change in our religious and social systems and the change will decidedly be for the worse. There will no longer remain that strong desire for social reform which is one of the most healthy signs of the times, since the higher communities here will be weakened by the loss of that aid and co-operation which they have hitherto received from West Bengal. Linguistic affinity will, moreover, slowly but steadily disappear. Owing to the present intimate connection between Dacca and Calcutta, uniformity in language, written and spoken, has been successfully kept up, and there has been a steady improvement in East Bengal in the quality both of the Bengali works and of the spoken language. There cannot be the least doubt that the language of East Bengal will suffer greatly by the change and may in course of time become a different language altogether.

That education will suffer, and suffer greatly, by the change, cannot be doubted. The standard of education in Assam is far inferior to that existing in Bengal and the standard prevailing in those parts, instead of being kept up, will gradually be made to conform to that of Assam. Primary education, the present paramount necessity in India, will receive no stimulus from the new Government. This will be due to the financial difficulties from which that Government perennially suffers and which is sought to be remedied by the change in contemplation. We shall give below our reasons for thinking

that all our surplus revenue will be absorbed in the improvement of the Chittagong Port Trust, the Assam-Bengal Railway and in other schemes which will be undertaken for the benefit of European traders. Educational and Public Works establishments will have to be starved in order to further trading interests and we shall find the Cimmerian darkness of Assam steadily spreading over these districts.

Under the new regime we shall have no high education worthy of the name. Limited in its means and backward in its general tendency, the new Administration will not spare much for the maintenance of really good colleges. It is certain that the anticipated decline of high education will not be regarded by the Government in the same light as we do, since its tendency of late has been to discourage it as much as possible. And we have reason to fear that the Government of Assam will not hesitate to carry the retrograde educational policy of the Government of India to its utmost logical conclusion.

There cannot be the least doubt that the scheme is undertaken principally in the interests of the tea-planting and other European commercial communities of Assam and also of the Assam-Bengal Railway. This latter Railway has not apparently produced the results which were anticipated by its promoters and "the heavy expenditure incurred" on it has not been "justified" by the results so far attained. If it is to become a really "paying" concern, yielding dividends half of which would satisfy railway promoters in other parts of the world, the whole of it must be placed under one administration. Nothing short of this will raise it to a level of equality in profits with the other Railway Companies in India which earn profits which are the envy and despair of foreign Companies and yet continue to enjoy the privilege of treating their third class passengers more like cattle than like human beings. We do not understand why the alleged disadvantages of a divided control should operate more strongly against the interests of this particular Company than against those of any other, more specially as we know that the East Indian Railway passes through the territories of three Lieutenant-Governors. If disadvantages and inconveniences, whatever their nature might be, have been removed and mitigated in the case of the last mentioned and other Companies in India, we fail to understand why they should not be capable of being remedied in the case of this particular Company. It cannot be said that the various provinces in India are independent of the Supreme Government in their Railway administrations. They are all, in this respect, subject to the Public Works Member of the Executive Council of the Governor-General of India. There is this one supreme authority which can adjudicate and decide all questions arising between these Companies whenever their interests are found to be in conflict with each other. It ought to be a matter of indifference to such a high authority whether Calcutta gains or loses by any change which tends to the advantage of the Assam-Bengal Railway. Apparently, hitherto, this Company has had to come out second best in its struggles with Calcutta merchants representing rival interests. Hence its eager desire to shake off the fetters imposed by this obnoxious administration. There is, however, the Public Works Member already referred to, and if hitherto all appeals to this exalted authority have failed, we cannot see how better results will be secured in the future. It may be, that the Railway Company in question will hereafter find itself placed upon a much sounder financial footing, but this will be the effect, not of the removal of the dual control existing at present, but of the addition to the Province of districts which yield good surpluses, which are things unheard-of in poor Assam.

III.—Legislation.

Bharat Mitra. Dec. 19th, 1903.

Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjee not elected for the Viceregal Council.

33. The *Bharat Mitra* [Calcutta] of the 19th December is sorry that this time also the Legislative Council of Bengal has not elected Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjee for the membership of the Viceregal Council. He is, of course, the ablest statesman in Bengal and has spent his whole life in political discussion. It is rather a misfortune for Bengal that a statesman like him should not be provided with a seat on the Viceregal Conncil.

34. The *Burdwan Sanjivani* [Burdwan] of the 29th December writes:— BURDWAN SANJIVANI, Dec. 29th, 1903.

The Universities Bill.

We are of opinion that Lord Curzon has acted wisely in proposing to reform the Indian educational system. Let His Excellency abolish this pernicious system which has increased poverty in the country, which threatens our extinction at no distant date, and which is hurrying us on to ruin. The money which we are spending for University education, we cannot earn when we have completed our education. We are moving heaven and earth with our cries of despair! The learning we have acquired by parting with all our treasures is worth nothing. We are exchanging mountains of gold for heaps of tinsel!

The object of the British rulers in giving us English education is to help Englishmen in extending their trade, and to consolidate English rule, in this country. What fools we must be that we think ourselves equal to Englishmen simply because we have learned to write and speak English like Englishmen. We are well-grounded in English, forsooth! But we are unable to write even a simple letter in Bengali which is our mother-tongue. We lack even the most elementary knowledge of our country, and yet we are proud of our English education. By all means let such a worthless system of education be reformed.

35. The *Pallivasi* [Kalna] of the 30th December writes that the Excise Act Amendment Bill, which has been introduced in the Bengal Legislative Council, proposes to insert in the existing Act very stringent provisions. Let Government make any rules it pleases to increase its excise revenue, but the wine called "*Mrita Sanjvani*" should never be included in the list of exciseable articles. It is an Ayurvedic medicine which does infinite good to mankind and should therefore be excluded from the scope of the Excise Act. PALLIVASI, Dec. 30th, 1903.

The Excise Act Amendment Bill.

36. The *Mihir-o-Sudhakar* [Calcutta] of the 1st January writes:— MIHIR-O-SUDHAKAR, Jan. 1st, 1904.

The Official Secrets Act Amendment Bill.

It must be admitted that in most cases Government is actuated by good motives in making laws and regulations. But such is our misfortune that even the best things, instead of helping us, go against us. We cannot imagine why all official news without any exception should be kept secret and their publication be made penal. Naval and military matters should certainly be kept secret. But we cannot understand why executive and judicial matters should be treated as secrets. The fact is that if the Official Secrets Act Amendment Bill is passed, the people and the native papers in particular, will have to suffer grievous wrongs. It will then be almost impossible to conduct newspapers in this country. Government should explain what special reasons there are which have necessitated the amendment of the Official Secrets Act of 1889. We hope that the Select Committee will reject the Bill.

37. Referring to Mr. Raleigh's and the Viceroy's criticisms of Mr. Gokhale's Council speech on the Universities Bill, the *Hitavadi* [Calcutta] of the 1st January writes as follows:— HITAVADI. Jan. 1st, 1904.

The Universities Bill.

We are not astonished at the futility of Mr. Raleigh's attempt to refute Mr. Gokhale's arguments But His Excellency's speech intended for the same purpose has very much grieved us because the Viceroy has rebuked Mr. Gokhale for unfavourably criticising the Bill, without entering into the spirit of the Hon'ble Member's speech. His Excellency has said that he could have, if he had so desired, easily "started the work of reform of education on strictly departmental lines," but instead of doing that he is "adopting a measure" "after a careful examination of the existing system lasting over a period of years, after listening to expert advice drawn from every University and from every part of the country, and after considering the remedies that have been put forward by all those whom we have consulted" in order "to purify our system of existing defects" and "to show the way by which our Universities, which are now merely examining Boards, can ultimately be converted into teaching institutions." But for all this trouble, His Excellency regrets, people, instead of thanking Government, impute dishonourable motives to it.

Pardon us, my lord, we cannot thank you for the Universities Bill. You have not been able fully to realise our feelings on the subject. We thank you most heartily for taking so much interest in the matter of educational reform; but the real question in dispute is how far the honourable intentions of

your Government will be fulfilled by the proposals embodied in the Universities Bill.

As His Excellency has rebuked the opponents of the Bill in plain undisguised terms, we hope that he will not be displeased with us if we, in our turn, tell him one or two plain words. Can His Excellency say that the proposed enactment will not enhance the cost of education? Will not the provisions of the Bill, if applied to mufassal colleges, lead to their abolition? Perfect education is, of course, better than imperfect education. But is not some education better than no education? How will poor mufassal students receive education if the mufassal colleges are abolished? It is said that the disappointed B. A. sows the seed of discontent in the country. But will the proposed enactment remedy this evil? You will gradually snatch away all high posts from the natives, you will not take a man as an apprentice for a place of Rs. 15 or Rs. 20 unless he has passed the F. A. examination, you will not provide any means of earning a livelihood for uneducated and half-educated men, and, at last, you will make high education too costly for many people, but if any one says anything against all this you will call him ungrateful!! Is this your justice? What provision has Lord Curzon made for the livelihood of those poor people who will be deprived of high education if it is made too dear for them?

His Excellency is of opinion that the Universities cannot do good work unless under the authority of Government, but he has not clearly said why it should be so. Lower education has long remained under Government control. But what sort of improvement do we see effected in it? Does Lord Curzon desire to effect similar improvements in higher education? His Excellency has said, "there has scarcely been a week since then (five years ago) in which the matter has not been in my mind." This is, no doubt, a proof of his great mental power. But it is a matter of great regret that so much labour and thinking should, like the mountain in labour, have produced such insignificant results. We are in favour of reforms, because we know that our system is defective. But we believe that the proposed reforms would be productive of more harm than good, and of this belief even His Excellency's speech has not been able to disabuse our minds. If we had lived under Russian rule we would have bowed our heads to whatever it might do. But living, as we do, under the civilised British Government, should we not be allowed to speak our minds freely?

VI.—Miscellaneous.

Rangalay, Jan. 2nd, 1904

The New Year's Day honours.

38. The *Rangalay* [Calcutta] of the 2nd January writes as follows:—

The New Year's Day under the Musalman Emperors was a happy day both for themselves and their subjects. The Musalman Emperors who had become permanent residents of the soil showered, on those occasions, wealth upon their subjects. But the English rulers who are only sojourners in the land shower, on these occasions, only empty titles upon their subjects.

The titular distinctions conferred by the English Government upon Europeans have their value in European society and represent real worth in the recipients. But such distinctions conferred upon natives have little value in native society, for such titles have to be purchased with money even to their proper decorations and are, as a rule, conferred without any regard to caste, character, ability and even wealth. In fact, those alone receive titles who can flatter Europeans and pay handsome subscriptions.

No one now understands by the title of Raja what one once understood by that title. This title imposes no social obligation whatever. Even pleaders and traders are now made Rajas and nobody expects anything of them.

The English rulers can decorate with titles whomsoever they please, but they have no power to make the titles so conferred respected in society. The fact is that the English Government never confers any title with an eye to the public good or to mark its appreciation of real merit. It never confers upon recipients of titles the means of maintaining the dignity of such titles. Many, on the other hand, have been ruined by receiving titles.

Emperor of India as the Englishman is, he cannot exercise two functions belonging to an Emperor: he can neither give nor take away caste. An

Indian loses his caste if he crosses the sea voluntarily, but he does not lose caste when convicted and transported by the English Government on a charge of murder or dacoity. In the same way a low Indian honoured by Government with a title has not his social position improved in the least. This shows in what slight esteem approbation or disapprobation of the English Government is held by native society.

We are glad to see Mr. Bourdillon made a K.C.S.I., and surprised to see Mr. Greer made a C.S.I. The title of Rai Bahadur conferred upon the distinguished Subordinate Judge, Babu Dwarakanath Mitra, will not raise but rather lower him in social estimation. It will only make people laugh. This last title has not been conferred this year upon very insignificant men, but Lord Curzon is mistaken if he expects to raise the value of that distinction by that means.

39 The same paper writes as follows:— RANGALAY, Jan. 2nd, 1904.

The Ancient Monuments' Preservation Bill.

It is said that on the occasion of his visit to the Bhuvaneshawar Temple, Lord Curzon could not enter into it on account of the opposition of its *pandas*, feeble though that opposition was. After this, the Ancient Monuments' Preservation Bill was drafted. The object of the proposed enactment is not bad. But the English do not know what ails us most. It is true that the soft places in our hearts are being gradually hardened and that we are powerless against our tormentors. When Kalapaharh and Aurangzeb were not able to kill us by their oppressions, we shall gladly bear the milder oppressions of Englishmen. But still oppressions are oppressions, even though they may be committed by Englishmen.

URIYA PAPERS.

40. The *Utkaldipika* [Cuttack] of the 26th December says that the Hon'ble Justice Dr. Guru Das Banerjee, a Judge of the High Court, Calcutta, has, owing to ill-health, applied for permission to retire from service in February next, and that it is rumoured that Babu Sarada Charan Mitra, who officiated before as a Judge of the Court, will be appointed in his place. All the natives who have been up to this time appointed as Judges of the Court have proved themselves worthy of the high position. It is therefore a pity that the number of native Judges in the High Court is not being increased. UTKALDIPIKA, Dec. 26th, 1903.

Appointment of native Judges in the Calcutta High Court.

41. Adverting to Lord Curzon's speech on the Official Secrets Bill, the same paper observes that it is the general belief that His Excellency will not unnecessarily give pain to any one. The existing Act deals with the secrets of the Military Department and no mention is made in it of the Civil Administrative and Judicial Departments. His Excellency has made no mention in his speech as to when and why the provision regarding secrets of the Civil Department was inserted in the proposed law, and his silence on these points is the sole cause of the prevailing discontent. The public will not be satisfied until the required information is furnished by the Government. No one has any objection to the secrets of the Military Department being jealously guarded. UTKALDIPIKA.

The Official Secrets Act amendment Bill.

42. Referring to Mr. Risley's letter regarding the proposed transfer of Ganjam, Sambalpur and part of Chutia Nagpur to Orissa, the same paper thanks the Viceroy for his realizing the propriety of the heart-felt desire of the Uriya-speaking people and for his wish to give effect to that desire. The present Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, while Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces, came to know the wants of the Uriyas, and did his best to supply them. Fortuuately he is now the ruler of Orissa. It is therefore firmly believed that His Honour will duly consider the present sad condition of the Uriyas and do what he thinks proper for their advancement in future. UTKALDIPIKA.

Union of Ganjam, Sambalpur, and Chutia Nagpur with Orissa.

43. The *Uriya and Navasamvad* [Balasore] of the 16th December in its Uriya column agrees with Raja Baikanth Nath De Bahadur, of Balasore, in the opinion that all the Uriyas should be united together and placed under one Government. URIYA AND NAVASAMVAD, Dec. 16th, 1903.

Union of Ganjam, etc., with Orissa.

UTKALDIPIKA, Dec. 26th, 1903.

Public health.

44. The *Utkaldipika* [Cuttack] of the 26th December says that cholera has again made its appearance in Cuttack town and that the health of the town of Puri is good. The *Uriya and Navasamvad* [Balasore] of the 16th December and the *Samvadvahika* (Balasore) of the 24th December state that small-pox has appeared in Balasore town.

ASSAM PAPERS.

PARIDARSAK, Dec. 26th, 1903.

Proposed transfer of Chittagong Division with Dacca and Mymensingh to Assam.

45. The *Paridarsak* [Sylhet] of the 26th December has the following in English:—

We had hopes that with the territorial extension of the Province lately proposed by the Government of India, we would be placed under a Lieutenant-Governor, but we must say that we are sadly disappointed in our hope. The Government of India in their letter to the Bengal Government have spoken of the many supposed, and rather fanciful advantages accruing to the Province by this extension, but they maintain a studious silence on this—the all-important subject, which is certainly ominous and does not bode us any good. We do not know how much longer it will please our enlightened rulers to keep us under a benighted non-regulation administration, which is quite un-British and a perfect anachronism at this age. So long as this real disability is not removed, we fail to see what good this transfer will do to us. Mr. Risley speaks of artificial agitation and interested outcry. We are not concerned with what "artificial agitation" may mean in ethnological vocabulary, but we freely admit that the outcry raised against the proposal is due to the fact that the people are vitally interested in the matter. And it is because the people feel deeply, that they raise their united voice against the proposal. Where then does the "artificiality" complained of come in, except, perhaps, in the superficiality of the Ethnological brain? Mr. Risley should not forget that it is not everybody who will willingly go to poke his nose into anything that does not concern him in the least and raise an outcry in the name of disinterestedness pure and simple, although we admit we are bound to give Mr. Risley credit for this kind of disinterestedness, as the memorable ethnological passage in the precious Census Report of his regarding the caste precedence in Bengal is still green in our memory. We are not concerned with all this. All that we are concerned with at this moment is his statement that any agitation that may now be got up against his scheme will die out in course of time, as did the outcry when Sylhet was separated from Bengal. Can there be anything more unsympathetic than this? We are, however, grateful to Mr. Risley for this bit of outspokenness, as it indicates clearly, if any indication were indeed needed, in what light our *Ma Bap* Government regard popular opinion. Would Mr. Risley or any responsible public servant dare hint at such a thing in England or in fact in any other civilized country? Be that as it may, we must ask Mr. Risley to forgive us if we say, as we are bound to say, that we take strong exception to his statement that Sylhet has gained much more by its transfer to Assam than it would have done had it not been so transferred. We simply refuse to believe such a thing in the absence of any proof whatever. We need only say that we are not believers in the satanic doctrine of "better to reign in hell than to serve in Heaven." There is yet another statement of Mr. Risley's which we deny *in toto*, as it is quite unfounded, that the Sylhet people would not be willing to go back to Bengal, if any opportunity were offered them.

NARAYAN CHANDRA BHATTACHARYYA,
Bengali Translator to Government.

BENGALI TRANSLATOR'S OFFICE,
The 9th January, 1904.

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